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ABSTRACT

This practicum was aimed at increasing children's abilities to use the computer through word processing activities. Most of the activities involved children working in cooperative groups. Another objective of the practicum was to incorporate the computer into the language arts area. A third objective was to effectively use a single computer beyond drill and practice with an entire class of 24 second-graders. Activities involved writing narratives and friendly letters on an individual basis. Other activities included writing global reports as well as creative stories in groups of two or three students. The children evaluated each of the activities and gave constructive feedback as to how to expand or improve upon them. Children received training in booting up, saving, retrieving, and printing files. Outcomes of the practicum were very positive in that each of the 24 children became proficient at word processing and working with files. The activities were successfully completed by all of the children and word processing projects were planned for the remainder of the year. The practicum demonstrated that a computer can successfully be incorporated to generate language arts activities in a one-computer class. (Six tables of data are included; 26 references and 6 appendixes--containing instruments, a questionnaire, and a student reaction form--are attached.) (Author/SR)

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Beyond Drill and Practice: Process Writing in a One Computer Second Grade Classroom Through A Variety of Writing Activities

by

Lillian Weisberg

Cluster 38

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

1991

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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April 16, 1991

This practicum report was submitted by Lillian Weisberg under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

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Date of Final Approval Dr. Georgianna Lowen, Adviser

Dr. Georgianna Lowen

JUL 1991

ABSTRACT

Beyond Drill and Practice: Process Writing in a One Computer Second Grade Classroom Through a Variety of Writing Activities. Weisberg, Lillian., 1990: Practicum I Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Computer in the Classroom/Language Arts Activities/Whole Language/Second Grade Activities/Process Writing/One Computer/Cooperative Learning/Global Awareness/Narratives/Creative Stories/Letter Writing/Word Processing.

This practicum aimed at increasing children's abilities to use the computer through word processing activities. Most of the activities involved the children working in cooperative groups. Another objective of the practicum activities was to incorporate the computer into the Language Arts area. A third objective was to effectively use a single computer beyond drill and practice with an entire class.

Activities involved writing narratives and friendly letters which were done on an individual basis. Other activities included writing global reports as well as creative stories which were done in groups of two and three. The children evaluated each of the activities and gave constructive feedback as to how to expand or improve upon them. Children received training in booting up, saving, retrieving and printing files.

Outcomes of this practicum were very positive in that each of the twenty four children became proficient at word processing and working with files. The activities were successfully completed by all of the children and word processing projects are planned for the reminder of the year. The practicum demonstrated that a computer can successfully be incorporated to generate Language Arts Activities in a one computer class.

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7/27/91 Lillian Weisberg

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The elementary school where this practicum took place was in the southeast section of the United States. The school had 727 students from kindergarten to sixth grade. There were 25 classroom teachers and 7 exceptional education teachers. The breakdown of the student population was as follows: 4% Asian, 23% black, 14% Hispanic and 58% Caucasian. The neighborhood was middle class and the parents were extemely supportive of the school. The Parent Teachers Association was highly active and raised funds to provide curriculum materials such as globes, maps, computers and software. The school consisted of a closely knit staff and the administration was positively open to input from the staff and parents.

This was the second year the school had been under School Based Management (SBM) which meant the staff and administration cooperatively made decisions regarding curriculum, budget allocations and any other major decisions affecting the school. There was a great deal of open

affecting the school. There was a great deal of open communication and a spirit of unity amongst the staff. Parents were encouraged to volunteer and many did so.

The neighborhood was in the midst of change and as a result the school was getting overcrowded. Many new teachers had joined the staff as well as portables having been added. The population continued to grow and diversify.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The classroom where this practicum was implemented was a second grade class consisting of 26 heterogenous children of mixed ethnicity. There were six black children, three Hispanic, one Arabic child who spoke no English and 16 other children. The academic levels varied from one who was in the gifted program twice a week to six who were below grade level in reading and writing. The majority of the children were on grade level.

The school had adopted a new reading series using the whole language approach. This meant that everyone read from the same reading book and received spelling, handwriting and grammar practice from the story of the week. Children were heterogenously grouped at tables of four and much of the work was done on a cooperative basis. Groups were changed monthly so that each child worked with every other child in the classroom by the end of the year.

A great emphasis was placed on writing in this program. Each child wrote in a journal for ten minutes a day. In addition, each child wrote a story, letter or poem as an offshoot of the reading assignment on a weekly basis. The children were assigned the topic and told who the audience was and what they were to address in their writing. Assignments were given on Wednesdays and were to be completed and ready to share with the class by Friday. The children were required to revise with a buddy for sequence, coherence, spelling and punctuation prior to conferencing with the teacher. When the child revised with the teacher, suggestions were made and/or questions asked to provide clarity to the writing. The child was then sent back to make a final copy inserting all the revisions made by himself, his buddy and the teacher. On Fridays each child shared his piece with the class and a book was made for all to see. Grades were not put on the final copies but on the drafts so that the class book was not touched.

In addition to writing, a great emphasis was placed on reading in this classroom. Each child was required to spend fifteen minutes of sustained silent reading which involved reading any book or magazine of his choice during class. Children were encouraged to bring books and magazines from home to read during this time. In additon the teacher read at least one book a day to the class. The class was also encouraged to read at home by participating in "Book It"

which was a program sponsored by a large pizza chain which gave a pan pizza once a month to every child who had met the monthly reading quota established by the classroom teacher. Daily reading records of each child were maintained on a central computer in the county and the number and type of books read were printed on the report card every nine weeks. The top three readers of the class were given "free coupons" to be redeemed in the classroom for free time, no homework or class rental.

The children worked well together in cooperative groups and generally earned higher grades on group projects than on individual ones. Groups also earned points for getting materials out quietly and quickly as well as working quietly and staying on task; this helped promote unity within the group. Each member of the group with the most points received a "free coupon". The rental coupon entitled the child to rent anything in the classroom over night or for the weekend. Items included the globe, books, computer disks and classroom pets. The free time coupon enabled the child to have 15 minutes of free time in the library, at the art corner or at the computer. These coupons were redeemed at any time and they were quite popular with the students.

The teacher's role in the classroom was to guide the learning and to make sure each group stayed on task. The slower learners were pulled to be worked with on an individual basis. She had to be aware of each child's

progress and provide additional guidance when a child was uncertain or confused. She maintained records and made sure that each child handed in assignments. She made parent contact if a child needed additional help and monitored each child's progress. If progress was slow or minimal she sought other avenues of assistance such as volunteers, peer tutors, compensatory education teacher, testing for learning disability and/or parental intervention.

She was aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each child and built upon them. She was kind, patient and compassionate and tried not lose sight of the individual behind the need.

The teacher had a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). This was her third year at this school. Previously she had taught five years at an inner city school. She had taught kindergarten for four years, first grade for two years and this was her second year teaching second grade. Prior to teaching in the public schools she had taught ESOL at a local university for four years. She had been director/head teacher of a daycare center for two years after graduation from college. Because of her diversified background she had been very receptive to changes and did not hesitate to attempt to incorporate innovative techniques into her teaching.

She had had an extensive background in computers because she had taken all the inservice courses offered by the district. She had taken Basic programming, LogoWriter, and a variety of word processing courses. The most recent course had been taken the summer prior to the implementation of the practicum and it involved using the computer in the Language Arts Curriculum.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem addressed by this practicum was that the computer had not been used for process writing. Students had not been given the opportunity to incorporate writing, spelling and English skills together by using the word processor. The computer had been generally used for the remediation of skills in reading and math.

The fact that the classroom had one computer to be shared by the 26 students in the class was one of the reasons for this predicament. Another contributing factor was the segmentation of the curriculum which precluded the students from having the necessary time to learn word processing skills. Due to these two factors as well as a few other hindrances which were addressed in this practicum the computer had mainly been used for drill and practice in reading and math.

Problem Documentation

Upon examining the county objectives it was clear that word processing skills were not required. This was a subject that had not been addressed and therefore there was no pressure to teach the students these skills. The following Table shows the required county courses as well as the number of objectives in the second grade curriculum for each subject, the last column represents the number of objectives related to computers in each of the subjects.

Table 1

County Mandated Second Grade Courses

Subjects	Objectives	Computer Related
Language Arts/ Reading	36	0
Health & Safety	18	0
Math	48	0
Music	37	0
Science	49	0
Social Studies	23	0

The writer of this practicum had had a computer in the classroom for three years and had not used it to teach word processing because of the lack of time as well the difficulty of scheduling and keeping track of the students' progress. Since it was not a required subject the computer had been used for drill and practice and not in the word processing capacity which this practicum addresses.

Causative Analysis

Prior to the year in which this practicum was implemented classes were cross grouped within grade levels for reading and math. As a result the population of the classes changed at least three times a day. In addition only a limited amount of time was devoted to Language Arts because it was divided into specified times for Reading, Spelling, Handwriting and English. There was virtually no time left to teach word processing skills to the students. As a result the computer was generally used for remediation of skills instead of developing writing skills.

Students were seldom exposed to keyboarding activities nor taught to save, file, retrieve, delete and print files. There had not been an emphasis on these activities because they were not included in the county curriculum objectives. Another reason for the neglect of these skills was the fact that many teachers were not computer literate enough to teach it to their students. Computer literacy classes were

not a requirement and therefore only teachers with an interest in computers took the inservice courses offered. Those teachers who were computer literate found it difficult to incorporate word processing skills into their lesson plans because the demand of subjects and objectives to be covered in one day generally left little if any time to devote to this activity. Another reason word processing skills were not taught to the students was the logistics of having all the students share one computer. To successfully incorporate computers into the classroom would require a lot of time, commitment and creativity.

A constant worry faced by the teacher was believing that if a child was at the computer he was missing what was going on in the classroom. This was a concern that had to be overcome by anyone who had a desire and commitment to make process writing with a computer a reality in the classroom.

Relationship of Problem to the Literature

Ahl (1983), McCarthy (1988) and Berliner (1985) all cited lack of teacher training as the primary reason for the lack of computer use in the classroom. McCarthy (1988) stated that fewer than 15% of the teachers in the United States actually used computers in their teaching and the scarcity of computers was one of the causes. Ahl (1983) found that in one half of the schools with computers only one or two teachers were regular users. He found that in 20% of the schools which had computers, they were used less than one hour per day. The average elementary student got less than 25 minutes of computer time per week. One third of the elementary students got less than 15 minutes per week. He also claimed that when the average elementary school obtained more computers they did not give the students more time but extended it to add more students. LaFrenz and Friedman (1990) found that although 95% of the public school systems had computers only 50% of the teachers in those schools used computers at all.

Berliner (1985) stated that teachers were given workshops or inservice courses and were then expected to teach with the computer. There was no on site help to solve problems and no follow up to see if the instruction was being utilized. Luerhmann (1985) and McCarthy (1988) saw

the lack of funds in purchasing computers and software as a major setback because the budget was still made on a per pupil basis and the money had to cover books, crayons, pencils and other supplies as well as software. Software was thus delegated as an expensive option and generally ignored. Luerhmann (1985) also stated that teachers saw computers as an add on to the already crowded curriculum and did not integrate them into the existing subjects.

McCarthy (1988) also cited the lack of computers in the classroom. He found that some school districts had no computers while others had the optimum distribution which would be one computer per ten students. McCarthy observed that the computers that were in the classroom were generally used for enrichment activities such as drills and games. When computers were used in a more sophisticated manner such as simulations the teacher became a guide or facilitator. Many teachers felt frustrated because of their lack of training in computers. In order for computers to really take off in the classroom beyond the minimal uses they were currently used for, teachers had to be convinced that computers would help them teach better and were not their adversary.

McCarthy (1988) also saw the lack of communication between the teacher and software vendor as a problem. Vendors were not teachers and did not simplify the program so that the teacher could feel comfortable using it.

Vendors generally added so many options to the programs that the teachers had to go through the manual to understand it. Therefore it was not "teacher friendly" which frustrated the teacher who seldom had time to expend pouring over a computer manual. Teachers were reluctant to teach with a tool that they did not feel they had mastered and therefore would not attempt to use it.

Moursand (1989) postulated that colleges continued to prepare teachers in the traditional accepted method and had not taken technology and its influence on education as seriously as they should. He found that college education was made up of rigid methods and curriculum courses in a broad range of areas. Since the colleges and universities that educated teachers did not know which subjects to incorporate computers into, they generally gave very little instruction in them and did not show teachers how to integrate computers into all subjects areas.

Elser (1990) declared that computers were generally used for drill and practice of specific skills by repetitive presentation of the material. Although this was a good way for teaching certain skills it was not the most efficient way of using the computer. LaFrenz and Friedman (1990) claimed that seldom do the teachers use computers for sophisticated interactive knowledge and creative purposes. Teacher training and support was critical to expand the use of computer technology in the classroom.

Upon examining the research on process writing many of the following recurring concerns were addressed. Atwell (1985), Calkins (1983) and Graves (1975) advocated time for students to free write for at least ten minutes per day. The aforementioned activity enabled the students to get used to the writing process without worrying about the mechanics and the content. The more children wrote the better their writing would become because they would invest more of themselves into their writing. The authors referred to the described process as "ownership".

Graves (1975) cautioned about putting students on "writer's welfare" by feeding them topics and not letting them write about things they knew or cared about. He charged that their creativity was stifled and they became too dependent on the teacher for ideas. The longer students were fed topics the harder it would be to free them and to make them realize they had important things to say.

Calkins (1983) and Atwell (1985) warned that it was difficult for teachers to give this responsibility up because they were fearful that students would draw writer's blocks and would be at a loss as to what to write about. Letting students choose their own writing topics put responsibility of what to write on the students' shoulders and they took a more active interest in it. Writers put more of themselves into the piece and generally their

writing was more exciting and better because students had invested themselves into the writing.

Calkins (1980) found that students learned how to use punctuation better and in a more grammatically correct fashion when they learned the rules in the context of their writing. She discovered that when they first learned a new punctuation mark, they generally over used it but over time they used it correctly. Calkins (1983) also observed that students taught grammar in isolation through drill and practice dittos could not articulate the reasons for using the puntucation as well as students who had been taught the punctuation in the context of their writing. The former students also saw no need for punctuation and viewed it as a nuisance; whereas, the children who knew how and when to properly use the punctuation saw it as a way to better express their feelings in their writing.

Zeigler & Jalongo (1987) found that young children would write if they were given the opportunity. They also advocated that the writing should be limited to their experience and imagination. They discovered that some of the setbacks to young children writing were the teachers' lack of training in accepting writing that was imperfect. Many parents and educator's felt if the children could not do a perfect job they should not attempt it because it would reap failure. Zeigler & Jalongo (1987) also cited

insufficient support at the administrative level for writing in the primary grades.

Calkins (1986) observed that young children often imitated adults' everyday acts of writing such as making grocery lists, writing checks and writing letters. These activities she stressed stimulated young children's early attempts to write. Often children were not given opportunities to experiment with these activities.

Calkins (1986) also blamed the lack of writing skills students exhibit on the segmentation of the curriculum. She felt that not enough time had been given to writing and as a result the first draft was accepted with little or no attempt to improve upon it through revision and rewriting. She also asserted that when children were given artificial subjects they lost ownership of the piece and produced the bare minimum. Often students were given subjects of which they had no knowledge or imaginary pieces in which they had no interest.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was for the students to have used the computer more effectively by incorporating it into the Language Arts curriculum through process writing. The students involved were to use the computer for word processing narratives, letters, reports and stories. Some of these activities were to be done on an individual basis and others were to be completed in cooperative groups. Students were to learn how to edit, save, print, delete and retrieve files. The demonstration of mastery was to be the finished products which were to be published and shared within the class as well as with other classes. It was expected that all of the students would develop keyboarding skills and would become adept at using the computer.

Behaviorial Objectives

1. Each child was to take Toby the elephant home at least once and to word process a narrative about his/her activities with him. It was to be illustrated and shared with the class.

2. Each child was to word process a friendly letter. Each letter was to have the appropriate format.

3. Children were to work in cooperative groups of three and to research a country of their choosing. Each group was then to word process a report.

4. Pairs of children were to make up a story. They were then to word process and illustrate it.

5. Each student was to complete an attitude questionairre that would elicit information on the least and most favorite activities completed in the practicum.

Measurement of Objectives

Since the activities were to take place during the language arts period and two of the students were to be in a Learning Disabled class and one was to be in an ESOL class at that time, they were to be exempt from participating in the activities. It was expected that at least twenty of the

remaining twenty four students would complete each of the assignments.

1. In the Toby narrative, students were to write what they had done the night they took Toby home. The evaluation form which was to be used to assess the narratives is located in Appendix A. Each of their "adventures" were to be placed in a class book after it had been word processed.

2. The letters were to be evaluated by the form used as well as the cohesion and sentence structure of the piece. The evaluation instrument which was to be used to appraise the assignment is located in Appendix B.

3. The global reports were to require that each group research a country and give information regarding the language, customs and foods. The evaluation instrument which was to be used to evaluate the reports is located in Appendix C. A class book was to be made and each group was to share the report with the class. The questionairre located in Appendix D was to be used to give the students some guidance as to what to research in the library.

4. The stories were to have at least one character, a setting and a plot. They were to be judged on their creativity, sequence and word usage. The evaluation instrument which was to be used for the story activity is located in Appendix E.

5. The practicum activities were to be evaluated by the students at the end of the implementation period to determine the students' attitudes about them. The evaluation form located in Appendix F was to be given to the students.

At the conclusion of each activity the facilitator of this practicum was to chart the number of students who successfully completed each activity. An evaluation form was to be maintained on every student for each activity. A careful study was to be made of the aforementioned forms which are located in the appendices to ascertain which activities were most useful to the majority of students as well as ways to improve the activities. An accurate analysis was to ensue from the students' feedback as well as the implementor's observations .

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solution

The problem addressed by this practicum was the fact that computers were seldom incorporated into the Language Arts Curriculum through process writing. A combining of computers with process writing was the purpose of the practicum. The following literature review gave a clearer understanding of what was involved in process writing.

Atwell (1985) and Calkins (1983) advocated a writing workshop. They stressed that writers need a chunk of time on a regular basis to write about topics of their choice. They suggested that teachers have a variety of supplies such as markers, pens, stationary, booklets and different colored paper on hand for students to work with. The time block must be long enough for students to be able to write, as well as conference with each other and the teacher when needed. The idea was marvelous but in a practicum where activities must be clearly stated well in advance of the implementation period, it would have been difficult to do.

implementation period, it would have been difficult to do. Also since the practicum not only focussed on process writing but on incorporating the computer into these activities a clear concept of workable ideas had to be presented. However, because there was only one computer to work with in the classroom and each person's time was limited, much of the writing had to be completed at the desks.

Atkins (1984), Zeigler & Jalongo (1987) & Goetz (1985) all found that children needed many opportunities to write about real life experiences and had to be encouraged to do so by having an ample supply of writing instruments and paper. Sandmark & Coon (1988) and Zeigler & Jolongo (1987) stressed the importance of telling the children they are writers and encouraging them to write.

Pon (1988), Caissy (1987) and Karnowski (1989) pointed out the stages of writing as pre-writing which included brainstorming and clustering, drafting, and revising. The final stage was publishing which was done after conferencing with other students and the teacher. Included in the final step was sharing the writing with others.

Johnston & Johnston (1986) gave concrete steps to story writing which included visualizing the setting (time & place). The next phase would be to flesh out the main character by describing his appearance, likes and dislikes,

habits and feelings. The next step would be dramatizing a problem then making it worse until it climaxes. The final stage would be the solution which would not be brought on by violence or an authority figure. The solution should be brought about by a change in the character or protagonists. Johnston & Johnston (1986) stressed the need for original characters and not a cartoon or television character because that would lead the children to copy the script and not use their imagination to creatively come up with an original situation.

Karnowski (1989) suggested combining the Language Experience Approach (LEA) with the process writing approach. The similarity in both approaches was that they both entailed brainstorming, webbing and clustering. They were both comprised of children's experiences and language. Both approached reading and writing as an active process that was relevant to the student. The difference was that LEA dealt with a story made up by the entire class and in process writing each student made up his own story. Karnowski (1989) suggested that in the pre-writing stage the child come up with an idea and write down all he knows about it as well as draw a picture. After reviewing his writing the child will know if he has enough information to write a story about that particular topic. If the information is sufficient the child should write a "sloppy copy" which is the rough draft where ideas are put down in words and

pictures but spelling is not stressed. After the draft has been completed the student would read it to the teacher to determine if there were gaps or holes that needed to be worked on. Expansion and deletion were done during this stage and the final phase was the "publishing" where the final product was shared with others.

Keirans (1988) suggested a "project assignment" where each student writes six pages about an animal of his choice. She suggested each child pick six different animals. The following is an outline of what each page should contain:

Page 1 A picture or drawing of the animal.

Page 2 The child is to find four words to fit each category of the animal. These are the categories: Description, habitat, moves and special words.

Page 3 Supply facts about the animal such as:

A. Kind of animal
B. Place it lives (country & area)
C. Size (height & weight)
D. Physical description
E. Feeding habits
F. Natural enemies
G. Birth & development
H. Interesting Facts

Page 4 Tell a story about the animal to enhance their writing skills.

Page 5 Write a poem or song about the animal.

Graves (cited in Hillocks,1986) asserted that young writers are often reluctant to cross out or add material to a piece once it is written because they do not fully comprehend the revision process. Using the computer will enable them to do revisions more readily since nothing is permanant and can be easily moved or deleted.

The following activity came from Hyde. It involved writing narratives. The children's names are put in a jar and each day a name is picked. That child gets to take "Toby" the elephant home. The next day the child would come in and write the adventure he had with Toby. Later the child would share the adventure with the class and all the children's adventures would be compiled into a class book.

Description of Selected Solution

The Toby narrative was a good activity to undertake because it encouraged the children to write about their own experiences. Each child's experience was unique, individual and made him feel important when he shared it with the class. The narrative activity was ongoing throughout the three month implementation period.

Each child word processed a letter. The letter was a simple activity which was used as one of the first activities to acquaint the students with the word processor and printer. The children mailed out the letter and in the process learned how to properly address an envelope.

An original activity thought of by the facilitator of this practicum was to have children in groups of three choose a country to research. Information such as continent, language, customs, climate and government was required. Students compiled their information into a report; then they gave group reports on their respective country. The reports encouraged cooperative learning and research skills, in addition the reports tied in with the "global awareness" skills the school was attempting to promote. Each classroom in the school had chosen a country to study. As a result the children's eyes had been opened to the world around them and they really enjoyed learning

about other countries. The activity required the children to use the library and work cooperatively to find the information required. Appendix D has the information each group was encouraged to find for its respective country.

A final idea was to have children work in groups of three to write a story to share with other classes. They decided as a group who the characters would be and the setting involved. They used The Children's Writing and Publishing Center to word process and illustrate it. By the time the children had completed the previous activites they had had enough experience with the word processor and with cooperative learning groups to illustrate and publish a story. The story activity stimulated their imagination because there were no constraints as to what the book should be about.

These activities worked because the children had developed keyboarding skills throughout the implementation process of the practicum. They were given group as well as individual instruction in editing, saving, deleting and printing texts and files. They were given practice in using these skills by typing paragraphs and inserting and deleting text. All of these activities were exciting and within the capabilites of the students once they had received adequate training, practice and direction. The teacher closely monitored all activities and assigned the most capable students as well as the teacher aide to be "assistants".

Report of Action Taken

The implementation was begun on January 7, 1991 and concluded on April 4, 1991. The introduction to the basic computer terminology such as disk, disk drive, keyboard and monitor was done during the first week. Instructions as to correct disk handling and the importance of proper usage such as not touching the keys when the disk light is on and not having food or water near the terminal were given. The following paragraph was put by the computer and was typed by each child then the verbs were changed to the past tense by the child. The familiarization with the keyboard as well as cursor movement practice was the purpose of the activity.

Type this:

Linda comes home from school and does her homework. She plays with Jeremy at the park. They have fun together.
Do this
Use your arrow keys to move the cursor to the word comes-delete it and type came.
In the same way change the following words:
does to did
plays to played
have to had.

The paragraph including the changes was completed by each child in about ten minutes. Magic Slate II 40 column version was the word processor used for each activity except the story. As one child got done, he would tap the next one at the table. The assignment was completed by six children

during the first day. The task was completed by the entire class in one week.

Cards explaining how to boot up, print and save files were placed in an index card box next to the computer. Quick reference sheets to the word processors Magic Slate II and The Children's Writing and Publishing Center were also placed near the computer. The cooperative stories were done using the latter word processor.

Word processing a narrative was the first objective addressed. The introduction of Toby, the elephant was done on the second morning of the implementation period. The explanation that each day someone's name would be picked from the basket and that person would take Toby home and the following morning would be expected to type up their adventure on the computer was given. The articulation that the illustration and sharing of the story would be required was also made clear. It was explained that at the conclusion of the practicum the adventures would go into a class book which would be bound . Excitement filled the air as names were quickly written and the children anxiously awaited to find out whose name was selected. Anticipation on the faces was evident and some even looked as though they were praying or wishing very hard!

Toby was taken home at least once by each child while some took him home twice. Some of the adventures on which he was taken were birthday parties, basketball games, the

mall and the movies. A great adventure would be typed by even the most reluctant students. Since each adventure was personal and unique and the children could easily write about things they did and were interested in, this activity was very successful. The illustrations were wonderful and their phonetic spelling really made sense.

Thirty four adventures were done at the conclusion of the implementation period. Toby was sometimes "forgotton" by the children which made the child responsible for writing an adventure for each day he was kept. The selection of a name was always an exciting time. If the teacher forgot to have a name chosen the children would quickly remind her. A chorus of "Who takes Toby home?" would be heard. The name was picked by a boy or girl on a rotating basis. This activity was enjoyed so much that it was voted to be continued until the end of the year.

The computer was booted up in the morning by the person who took Toby home and it would stay on all day. Other computer related projects were worked on by the children throughout the day. The computer was not used at all for drill and practice during the entire implementation period. Unless a test was being taken or a whole group activity which required everyone's participation was being done someone was always at the computer.

The first activity involving the entire class which was the second objective addressed was writing a friendly

letter. The letter activity was begun during the fourth week of the implementation period and it took ten days to complete. The Gulf War had just broken out so soldiers in different areas of the service were written to by five of the children. The school had undertaken a project to write to the troops but the only ones who word processed the letters were these students. Putting their feelings and words of encouragement down on the paper was something the children enjoyed although no replies were received. Letters were written by 22 of the 24 students and copies were placed in the practicum folder which the implementor kept on all the activities undertaken by the children. Some of the letters were written to relatives or parents thanking them for Christmas gifts they had received. Other letters were written to friends. The option of sharing the letters was given to each child. The majority of the letters were read by the students although a few chose not to share their letter.

Children who were more proficient at using the computer became the "experts". By the end of the implementation period everyone was proficent at booting up, word processing, saving, retrieving and printing files. It was gratifying to see that the helpers were called upon less and less.

Researching a country and doing a written as well as oral report was the goal of the third objective. It was

done on a cooperative basis. The activity was begun during the fifth week of the implementation period and lasted three weeks. A discussion as to what country they wanted to find out about took place after the children were placed in groups of three. Each presentation included input from every member of the group. Jamaica, Australia, Iraq, Spain, Saudi Arabia, India, Mexico and Canada were the countries chosen by the students. A copy of the questionairre located in Appendix D was given to each group. The initiation of the activity was done by going to the library as a class and looking in the encyclopedias for the respective countries. Each group was given time at the library.

Experimentation with the various fonts available on Magic Slate II was begun during this project and two or three different ones were used in some of the reports. The location of the country on a map and globe was done by each person in the given group. A social studies grade for global awareness was taken from this activity. Brochures of the countries which were available were brought in by a student whose mother works for an airline agency and lovely collages were made by some groups. There was no access to brochures from Saudi Arabia or Iraq because of the Gulf War. Little creativity was allowed in the assignment and therefore complaints about the difficulty of it was voiced by some of the children.

A cooperative creative story was the final activity undertaken by the students. The children were paired. The activity was begun during the ninth week and concluded in the twelfth week of implementation. This was by far the most popular one because the children had the most fun with it. Originally it was to have been a five page book but since our program The Children's Writing and Publishing Center did not allow for books we improvised by writing stories. Some stories were up to three pages long. The children were instucted to write a story about anything they wanted. They were briefly introduced to the different types such as adventure, mystery, comedy, horror and information. They were told to decide as a pair what type it would be, then to flesh out the character and a plot.

The plots of the stories ranged from The Dark Shadow about a scientist who wanted to take over the world to a fly who tricked a spider that wanted to eat him to Dracula, Frankenstein and Wolfman trapping teenagers in a "haunted castle". Each story was illustrated by the children with the various disks contained in the program. A suitable picture could not be found by one of the children so he chose to draw a picture of his "mutant warrior".

The children were extremely excited by this activity. Discussion of the story line with their buddy was exciting and productive. A running list was kept on the board for the children who were ready to word process the story.

Listening to the stories and watching how proud everyone was of sharing their "masterpiece" was one of the most enjoyable and fruitful times. Positive comments like "Wow, that was scary" or "Where did you ever get that idea?" brought a smile to many faces. At the conclusion copies were made of each story and every member of the class got a copy which was bound up in an original laminated construction paper cover. It was a wonderful activity and one which is well worth duplicating.

The student reaction form was completed by the students on the last day of the implementation period. Only twenty two of the twenty four students filled it out because two were absent that day. The general consensus was one of enjoyment although they did give suggestions as to improving it. Some of the suggestions were to write a newspaper, fix the spelling words and allow more time at the computer.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The Incorporation of the computer into the Language Arts curriculum in a one computer second grade classroom was the purpose of this practicum. Prior to the implementation of the practicum the computer had been used strictly for drill and practice therefore, the utilization of the computer in its word processing capacity was the express desire of the facilitator. A variety of activities such as narratives, letters, cooperative reports and stories were done by the children to achieve this end.

Objective one dealt with the children writing narratives after taking "Toby the elephant" home. The purpose of the activity was to familiarize the children with the word processor as well as promote writing skills by having the children write about personal experiences. It was also hoped that by writing freely about their own experience the children would come to view writing as a pleasant experience and not a dreadful chore to be avoided.

experience the children would come to view writing as a pleasant experience and not a dreadful chore to be avoided. The narratives were evaluated using the form located in Appendix A. The following table outlines the results of the activity.

Table 2

Narrative Results

	Yes	No
1. Details Given	31	3
2. Complete Sentences	32	2
3. Correct Punctuation	22	12
4. Correct Tense	29	5
5. Story Form	29	5
6. Cohesive	31	3
7. Descriptive Adjectives	6	28

Total = 34

As is evident from the table the narrative activity was very successful in meeting the stated objective. The use of adjectives to liven up the writing as well as correct placement of punctuation were the weak areas of the activity. Run on sentences were a problem evident in some of the children's writing but in terms of grammar and content most did a fine job. Story form and many details were apparent in most of the writings. The past tense was

almost always used correctly. Most of the narratives were a paragraph in length but a few were up to three paragraphs as more details were given by the students. The children enjoyed writing the narratives and voted to continue writing them until the end of the year.

The second objective addressed the writing of a friendly letter using the correct form. The intent of the letter writing was again to incorporate the computer into the Language Arts area and to teach the children the proper structure of a friendly letter. The results of the evaluation instrument which is located in Appendix B is given in the following table.

Table 3

Letter Results

	Yes	No
1. Proper spacing of heading and closing	22	0
2. Proper heading	22	0
3. Proper Greeting	22	0
4. Capitol letter in appropriate areas	18	4
5. Correct Indentation	13	9
6. Five sentences in length	8	14
7. Appropriate Closing	22	0

Total = 22

The activity was successful in meeting the objective although some weaknesses were evident in the children's writings. The areas where the children need more instruction in is correct indentation, uses of capitilization and writing longer letters with more details. The required form which included a heading, greeting, body, closing and signature was on all of the letters. The first paragraph was indented by only thirteen of the children. The return address was put in the proper place by the five children who had written to the soldiers. An envelope was brought in by each child and all of the letters were properly addressed and mailed. Six days was the duration of time it took the children to complete this activity. Although the children had mixed feelings about doing it the activity was successful.

The third objective addressed the researching of a country by groups of three. The purpose of the activity was to advance research skills as well cooperative learning. The following table outlines the results of the global reports according to the evaluation instrument located in Appendix C.

Table 4

Global Results

	Yes	No
1. Continent identified	5	3
2. Capitol given	8	0
3. Language	7	1
4. Surrounding Water	6	2
5. Climate	2	6
6. Type of government	4	4
7. Location on map and globe	8	0

Total = 8

The activity met the objective although it was very difficult for some groups to complete. Before duplicating the activity it would be best to spend more time on teaching researching skills and doing research together as a class prior to requiring the students to do it on their own. Finding out the type of climate the country had seemed to be the most difficult information for the children to obtain. The continent the country was located in was given in all of the oral presentations although it was not written on three of the reports. Most of the questions that were asked on the questionairre were answered by the children although it was not synthesized appropriately and was generally very choppy. The teacher was given an opportunity to talk about

plagiarism and the importance of reading, thinking and then writing about what was important when it was evident that many copied from the encyclopedia.

The final activity the children were required to complete was a story done in pairs. The story was by far the most fun activity for the children to complete. The following table gives the results of the evaluation instrument in Appendix E.

Table 5

Story Results

Type

Adventure	2
Horror	6
Information	1
Friendship	2

	Yes	No
1. Character identified	11	0
2. Description of characters	5	6
3. Plot evident	10	1
4. Ilustrated	11	0
5. Sequence and flow	7	4
6. Imaginative and creative	6	5
7. Original	6	5
8. Vocabulary descriptive and interesting	4	7

Total = 11

Twenty two of the twenty four students completed this project. It was not word processed by two of the children although they had written it because one of the pair had taken the last week of class off for an early vacation with her family and unfortunately she had also taken the story. The word processing of that story will take place when she

gets back. This activity allowed for the children's imagination to flourish and the more it is done the better the stories will become. It is best to spend more time with this activity to allow the children to experiment and to come up with the best story they can write.

The final objective involved the children evaluating the practicum activities using the form in Appendix F. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine which activities were most enjoyable, difficult and worth repeating. It also enabled the implementor to know how to improve on the activities and which additional ones the children would enjoy doing.

Table 6

Student Reaction Form Results

	Favorite	Least Favorite
Narrative	1	2
Letter	1	9
Report	4	9
Story	16	2
	Yes	No
Comfortable using a word processor	21	1

Note: Total = 22

The overwhelming favorite seemed to be the story. It was interesting to note that one student placed it as his favorite because he was able to write whatever he wanted, he also placed it as his least favorite because he had to work with a partner. Most of the negative comments about the reports were that it was too difficult to get all the information and was generally too much work. One of the students who rated the report as her favorite said she enjoyed it because she learned things about her country and the others that she had never known before. The postive comments about the story included working with a buddy, the colored pictures, the fact that they could write about anything and the scary stories that were written. The positive letter comments included that they enjoyed working alone and writing to whomever they wished. The negative comments were that it was boring and they did not like working alone. The narrative got two negative comments, one was that it was "dumb" and the other said he "slept too much."

Discussion

The activities contained in this practicum were successful in that they achieved the desired purpose which was to incorporate the computer into the Language Arts Curriculum and enable the students to become computer

literate. Each of the twenty four students became comfortable in using the word processor and in saving, deleting, retreiving and printing files. By the conclusion of the implementation period twenty one of the twenty two students who completed the student reaction form said they felt comfortable using a word processor.

Another purpose of the practicum was to involve the children in a variety of writing experiences so that they felt comfortable writing and would see it as a pleasant experience and not a dreaded chore. The activities served this purpose because there was a difference in the narratives from the beginning to the end of the implementation period. The narratives became longer and richer in detail. Towards the end there was very little room for the illustration because the children were typing so much information. The weakest activity seemed to be the global report and that was due to the fact that the children could put very little of themselves into it since they were researching facts. Since the letters were done early in the implementation period they were all very short with fewer than five sentences. This activity would have been interesting to replicate at the conclusion of the implementation period to note if the letters would have been longer after more familiarity with the computer had taken place. Some of the stories were weak in that the children were not very creative. A few sounded like scripts from

Freddy Krueger of Nightmare on Elm Street and Jason of Halloween. The majority of the stories however, were original and had cute story lines.

One of the problems encountered during the implementation process was the deleting of files. Often the children would type after someone had just completed their story. When the program would ask if they want to save it under the same name they would hit return which would automatically save their file under the previous file name. That would delete the previous file. After having done that approximately two or three times the children remembered to move the cursor to "no" before pressing return. They were then able to give the file a new name and thus save the preexisting file. Luckily each person printed the file before leaving the computer so although they did not have it on the disk they did have a hard copy which they retyped.

Another problem was that our printer burnt out in the last two weeks of the implementation period so our files had to be saved then the teacher had to go to another classroom to print it out. This was annoying because often the story or narrative was not read for two to three days.

The Children's Writing And Publishing Center printed the pictures in color and the bright, beautiful illustrations were enjoyed by the children. The take home books had no color illustrations because the duplicating machine only copies in black and white.

One of the off shoot activities done during the implementation period was the typing up of poems which were written by the students during one of their whole language lessons. It was called A Hunting We Will Go and almost all of the children were able to type their version out. A "cumulative" letter was written to a former student who had moved out of state. A paragraph telling her what was new and exciting was typed by each of the students. Weekly book reports were typed by some of the children who had become proficient at word processing. The activities were enjoyed so much by one child that a comment on her reaction sheet was that she was asking her mother to buy her a computer.

Recommendations

Devoting more time to creative projects such as additional stories and poems would improve the activities. Enabling the children to have more time to work on individual interests as well as group efforts would also enhance the finished products. More word processing could be done if an additional computer were available. However, as the results show a one computer class could do a number of Language Arts activities with little or no problem. A good plan of action, numerous creative ideas and lots of initiative are all it takes to effectively use a single computer. Many more projects will be done at the computer

as the year progresses. A discussion will take place detailing what endeavors the children would like to pursue using the computer.

A deletion or modification of the global report would be recommended since it was very difficult for the children to complete although most of the questions were answered. A reasonable alteration would be to have the class pick one or two countries to research and as a group go to the library and find out two or three facts at a time about that particular country. In this way it would not seem so overwhelming because it would be worked on together and alittle at a time. The information could then be synthesized so the students would understand how it is done. One country a month could be studied and after a few countries had been studied as a class, groups could be made to research a country of their choosing. The necessary research skills would have been acquired to enable the students to do an adequate job and to not get frustrated. All of these writings were done in conjunction with the weekly Language Arts writing assignments. More time for editing would have improved the finished products. Practicum activities, Language Arts weekly writing projects and <u>All About Me</u> books which are written for the school improvement plan were being done simultaneously which made editing nearly impossible. Editing was an insurmountable task with only one teacher to twenty four students and so

many writing activities being done. As a result most of the practicum activities were done without editing. Phonetic spelling made it easy for students to read one another's pieces. Parent volunteers would also have been helpful to have in this task. Revision of the work for the remainder of the year will be done by sixth grade students.

Dissemination

Because it was a simple and fun activity that the students enjoyed doing, a grant to disseminate the Toby narrative activity has been applied for. It enables even students with modest composing ability to shine. The children's writing capabilities are developed with no extra planning required on the teacher's part. It can also be done with or without a computer. At the end of the year the class will have a lovely book authored by the children in the classroom. It is also a favorite for everyone to read. The Toby activity has been shared with the staff through a Whole Language Newletter which is published by the school once a month. Interest in implementing it has been expressed by a few teachers. The creative story activity is one which an additional grant will be applied for because this type of writing allows for the most creativity on the part of the children. Future story writing will be modified somewhat in that each child will have the option of writing his own story or working with a buddy. An additional option of

writing poetry will be given because the ultimate product will be a chapter book. Each child will have a hard bound copy at the end of the year.

A copy of the final practicum report will be sent to the head of the computer department of the public school system. This will enable the implementor to share the activities and the results of the practicum with a multitude of educators who have only one computer in the classroom and are at a loss as to how to incorporate the word processing aspect of it into the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

NARRATIVE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX A

NARRATIVE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Name

Date

1. Did the student give details of where they went?

   Yes No

2. Did the student use complete sentences?

   Yes No

3. Did the student use correct punctuation marks?

   Yes No

4. Did the student write the story in the correct tense?

5. Did the student write his narrative in story form?

   Yes No

6. Was the story cohesive and flowing in structure or was it choppy and unorganized?

7. Did the student use descriptive adjectives and verbs?

APPENDIX B

LETTER EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX B

LETTER EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Name

Date

1. Did the student properly space the heading and closing?

   Yes No

2. Did the student have a heading?

   Yes No

3. Did the student have a greeting?

   Yes No

4. Did the student use capitol letters where appropriate in the various parts of the letter?

   Yes No

5. Did the student indent after the greeting?

   Yes No

6. Did the student write at least five sentences?

   Yes No

7. Did the student have a closing?

   Yes No

APPENDIX C

GLOBAL EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX C

GLOBAL EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Names

Date

1. Did the students give the continent where the country is located?

Yes No

2. Did the students give the capitol of the country?

Yes No

3. Did the students tell what language they speak there?

Yes No

4. Did the student give the bodies of water near it?

Yes No

5. Did the students give information regarding the climate?

Yes No

6. Did the students tell what kind of government the country has?

Yes No

7. Were the students able to locate the country on the map and globe?

Yes No

APPENDIX D

GLOBAL QUESTIONAIRRE

APPENDIX D

GLOBAL QUESTIONAIRRE

1. What is the name of the country?
2. What is the capital of the country?
3. Which continent is it on?
4. What countries surround it?
5. What bodies of water are near it?
6. What language do they speak there?
7. What type of government does it have?
8. What is their money called?
9. What products come from there?
10. What is the climate like?
11. What is the family structure?
12. How many years do the children go to school?
13. What type of sports or games are played there?
14. What kind of food do they eat there?

APPENDIX E

STORY EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX E

STORY EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Names

Date

1. Did the students have at least one character in the story?

Yes No

2. Were the character or characters described in detail?

Yes No

3. Did the story have a plot?

Yes No

4. Was the story illustrated?

Yes No

5. Was there a logical sequence and flow to the story?

Yes No

6. Was the story imaginative and creative?

Yes No

7. Was the story original?

Yes No

8. Was the vocabulary descriptive and interesting?

Yes No

APPENDIX F

STUDENT REACTION FORM

APPENDIX F

STUDENT REACTION FORM

NAME

Which was your favorite activity?

Narrative Letter Report Book

Why was this your favorite?

Which did you like the least?

Narrative Letter Report Book

What didn't you like about this?

Do you feel comfortable using a word processor?

Yes No

How would you change any of the activities?